

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00

FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 ACDA-05 NRC-05 /113 W

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R 200751Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6726
INFO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

CONFIDENTIAL TEL AVIV 3045

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TGEN, IS
SUBJ: ISRAELI ENERGY PROGRAM

1. THE SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGICAL ATTACHE MET WITH SHELHEVETH FRIER DG, ISRAEL ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF (TAVI, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DAVID PELEG, ADMIN OFFICER) ON MAY 1 FOR BRIEFING ON IAEC PLANS AND PROGRAMS. COINCIDENTLY BETWEEN TIME APPOINTMENT WAS MADE AND KEPT THE ISRAEL PRESS CITED THAT ON APRIL 27 THE ISRAELI CABINET HAD MADE DECISION TO HAVE A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT FUNCTIONING BY 1984 SO FOCUS OF MEETING SHIFTED TO THIS REPORT.

2. MR FRIER CONFIRMED THE REPORT WAS CORRECT ALTHOUGH HE STATED THE CABINET APPROVAL WAS IN PRINCIPLE AND A FINAL DECISION WILL AWAIT COMPLETION OF IAEC STUDY. HE BREAKS OUT THE STUDY INTO FOUR PARTS: A) SITE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY; B) SITE HARDENING PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTER TERRORISTS AND CONVENTIONAL WAR ACTIONS; C) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND D) RESOLUTION OF POLITICAL FACTORS, I.E., SAFEGUARDS. THE FIRST THREE PARTS ARE TO BE CONDUCTED CONCURRENTLY AND AT THE QUOTE

CRITICAL TIME UNQUOTE THE SAFEGUARDS ISSUE WILL BE VENTED. HE DID NOT WANT TO VENTURE A GUESS AS TO WHEN THAT TIME MIGHT BE AS IT WAS OF COURSE MORE OF A POLITICAL DECISION AND BESIDES THE PRESENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE DIDN'T NEED THE ADDITION OF MORE DIFFICULT ISSUES.

3. THE NITZANIM SITE IS STILL THE PRIMARY LOCATION FOR THE FIRST SYSTEM WITH A PLANNED CAPACITY OF 660 TO 800 MEGAWATTS. IAEC FORESEES 4-6 PLANTS BEING NEEDED BY ISRAEL BY TURN OF CENTURY. THEY ARE BEING ASSISTED BY TWO US CONSULTING FIRMS AND ALTHOUGH SPECIFICATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED GE AND WESTINGHOUSE HAVE BEEN KEPT AWARE OF PRELIMINARY SPECIFICATIONS. FRIER INDICATED SEVERAL OTHER US FIRMS HAVE SHOWN AN INTEREST, I.E., BABCOCK WILCOX, BUT HE WOULDNT SPECIFICALLY STATE IF NON-US FIRMS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS. (COMMENT: THE INFERENCE WAS THEY WOULD, BUT FRIER WAS PROBABLY RELUCTANT TO CONFIRM FEARING HE MAY INVOKE EARLY PRESSURES TO BUY AMERICAN. IN TURN FRIER IS A VERY SHREWD AND KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUAL AND WOULD APPRECIATE THE US EXPECTATION THAT ISRAEL WOULD PROPERLY BUY AMERICAN BECAUSE OF OUR ECONOMIC SUPPORT IN OTHER SECTORS.)

4. BECAUSE OF THE DELAY IN OBTAINING THE CABINET DECISION FRIER STATED THEY PLAN TO CONVENE A COMMITTEE IN THREE WEEKS TO REVIEW IF THEY SHOULD NOW BUILD A NUCLEAR DUAL-PURPOSE PLANT FOR POWER AND DESALINIZATION. WITH THE ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE IN ISRAEL THIS IS A NATURAL CONSIDERATION.

5. ADDITIONALLY, FRIER SAID ISRAEL HAS COMMENCED TO WORK ON THE HADERA SITE (APPROXIMATELY 250 ACRES) FOR A POWER STATION WHICH CAN USE COAL AND OIL (WE UNDERSTAND CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS PROJECT IS ALREADY ABOUT ONE YEAR BEHIND SCHEDULE). CONSTRUCTION OF THE FACILITY WHICH WILL HAVE ANNUAL CAPACITY OF 10,000 MILLION KILOWATT HOURS (EQUIVALENT TO TOTAL 1974 ISRAELI REQUIREMENT) PROVIDED BY FOUR GENERATORS WILL START LATE THIS YEAR WHEN THE GOVERNMENT GIVES FORMAL PERMISSION.

6. COMMENT: THE DECISION TO PROCEED WITH THE COAL/OIL CONVERTIBLE FIRED SYSTEM WHICH WOULD HAVE FIRST GENERATOR INSTALLED IN 1979 WOULD INDICATE ISRAELI A) PLANS TO ENSURE HAVING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES OF MEETING THEIR PROJECTED POWER REQUIREMENTS OR B) IF BOTH NUCLEAR AND THE HADERA FACILITIES WERE COMPLETED

THEN HAVING BOTH FACILITIES WOULD GIVE THEM MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY FOR FUEL SOURCES. OF COURSE ECONOMICALLY TO PROCEED DOWN BOTH PATHS WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE SO MOST LIKELY BOTH PROGRAMS ARE BEING PURSUED AT THIS STAGE AND ONE OR THE OTHER WILL BE DRASTICALLY CUT BACK OR CANCELED BY END OF THIS YEAR OR FIRST OF NEXT YEAR.

7. IT HAS BEEN OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES IN RESOLVING SAFEGUARDS ISSUE, US AGENCIES HAD PRETTY MUCH DECIDED TO PUT CONSIDERATION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS FOR EGYPT AND ISRAEL ON ICE. IN VIEW OF FRIER'S REMARKS TO US, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT WE MIGHT BE CONFRONTED WITH AN ISRAELI DECISION ON NUCLEAR PLANTS RATHER EARLIER THAN EXPECTED. WE WOULD WELCOME DEPT'S VIEWS ON WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS MIGHT BE, INCLUDING POSSIBILITY THAT ISRAELIS MIGHT SERIOUSLY TRY FOR FRENCH PLANT IF THEY THINK THEY ARE GETTING NOWHERE WITH US.

8. REQUEST EMBASSY BE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON US PROGRAM FOR NUCLEAR DUAL PURPOSE PLANTS FOR POWER AND DESALINIZATION AND STATEMENT IF THERE IS INTEREST IN POTENTIAL JOINT DEVELOPMENT FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT.

VELIOTES

CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, ENERGY, NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS, RESEARCH
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV03045
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750176-0824
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197505100/baaaaesf.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971015
Subject: n/a
TAGS: TGEN, IS
To: STATE INFO IAEA VIENNA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006